



**Date: February 17, 2022**

**To: Members of the House Committee on Health Policy**

**From: Hallie Fox, Legislative Aide | Nicholas Occhipinti, Government Affairs Director**

**Re: Support for The Lead Poisoning Prevention Act (HB 5413-5421 & 5423)**

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Chair Kahle and Members of the House Committee on Health Policy:

Thank you for the opportunity for Michigan LCV to share our support for the Lead Poisoning Prevention Act. Toxic lead contamination continues to affect thousands of Michiganders, and the bills before you will protect public health by reducing exposure and strengthening our existing care programs for affected Michiganders. We are encouraged that this legislation has received broad bi-partisan support, and we look forward to further engaging with the members of this committee to ensure this package's adoption.

**According to the CDC, there is no safe level of lead for human consumption.** Lead is a potent neurotoxin that causes a plethora of long term health impacts, including hearing and speech problems, kidney failure, fertility issues, seizures, developmental disabilities, and even death. These dangerous complications are especially pronounced for young children (under 6 years of age), who absorb 4x as much lead as adults and older children *and* who are at a critical stage in their brain development. Given the high toxicity of lead and its bioaccumulating properties, eliminating exposure is the most effective way to avoid serious health impacts.

**Urban and rural Michiganders continue to struggle with lead contamination, both in our water and our built environments.** The prevalence of lead across the state of Michigan is well documented. It is estimated that Michigan has over 450,000 lead water service lines providing drinking water to homes across the state (leading to 16 community water supplies having Lead Action Levels), and nearly 70% of Michigan's housing stock was built before 1978 (when the federal government banned the use of lead-based paint in buildings). As a result of lead's prevalence, every single county in Michigan currently has children under the age of 6 with elevated blood lead levels (>4.5 ug/dl). Furthermore, it is estimated that over 12,161 children born in Michigan in 2019 already have >2 ug/dl of lead in their blood.

**The Lead Poisoning Prevention Act will protect Michiganders from exposure, and will ensure Michiganders struggling with lead-related health effects get proper care.**

*HBs 5419-5421 Will Reduce Lead Exposure and Associated Health Impacts*

According to the EPA, exposure to lead-based paint in buildings is the leading cause of lead contamination for children. HB 5419 will reduce exposure to lead by ensuring that renters and homeowners are aware of the presence of hazards in their homes at the point of purchase, empowering them to either forgo purchasing or address contamination immediately. Furthermore, HBs 5420-5421 will streamline the lead abatement process for buildings and provide additional

protections against fugitive lead paint dust for families and for workers. These protections alone can help reduce childhood lead poisoning in Michigan by up to 70%, and pave the pathway for completely eliminating lead paint's presence in homes - an action that would save Michiganders nearly \$2.3B in the long run.

*HBs 5413-5418 & HB 5423 Will Help Impacted Michigan Children Quickly Get the Care They Need*

Thousands of Michigan children and families are dealing with the effects of lead contamination, yet gaps in our current law allows thousands more cases of lead poisoning to go undetected and untreated each year. HBs 5413, 5415, 5417, 5418, 5420 and 5423 will change the threshold for an elevated blood lead level from 10 ug/dl to 3.5 ug/dl to be in line with the most recent guidance from the CDC, and in the draft subs, will ensure that the level remains in line with CDC and MDHHS guidance. As a result, nearly 1,200 children who currently struggle with lead-related health effects will be automatically eligible for healthcare support and services specifically tailored to their unique needs.

Furthermore, HBs 5414 and 5416 will increase the number of Michigan children who are tested for lead contamination. In 2019, only 1 in 4 children under the age of 6 in Michigan were tested for blood lead levels, and in 2021, Michigan's blood lead testing rates dropped to only 14%, leaving potentially thousands of lead affected children without important treatments and interventions. In Oregon, where they have instituted a pilot program for required CME courses in lead, they have seen an increase in testing and therefore more treatments, even in the midst of the pandemic. Ensuring physicians are aware of the early signs and symptoms of lead poisoning and expanding automatic eligibility for blood lead testing to all children enrolled in MICHild are both great first steps to boost testing rates, which in turn will help ensure that affected children quickly get the care they need.

**Action is needed to ensure no Michigan family experiences the effects of childhood lead poisoning.** The Lead Poisoning Prevention act will make significant progress towards eliminating childhood lead exposure, and will protect public health.

On behalf of our members, Michigan LCV urges a "YES" vote on this legislation.

Respectfully,

Hallie Fox  
Government Affairs Legislative Aide  
Michigan League of Conservation Voters